Farm to School

The USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables

Washington State was one of eight states selected to participate in the USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables, as directed by the Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the Farm Bill. The pilot enables school districts to use their USDA entitlement funds to purchase locally-grown unprocessed fruits and vegetables. Through this pilot Washington State hopes to strengthen current school-vendor relationships and broaden the diversity of vendors selling to schools.

How to participate?

Vendors must apply to become a USDA approved vendor. Application details can be found on the USDA-AMS website and WSDA’s Farm to School toolkit.

1. **Product Liability Insurance**
   - Once approved, vendors will need to contract with schools and are responsible for submitting invoices to USDA at scpilotproject@usda.gov.

2. **Food Safety Certification**
   - USDA-AMS Specialty Crops Inspection Division or Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) recognized

School can participate by contacting the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI):

- **Sarah Davis**
  - Food Distribution Program
  - Child Nutrition Services, OSPI
  - sarah.davis@k12.wa.us
  - (360) 725-6215

Participation is open from February through April of each school year for the upcoming school year. School districts get to determine their own entitlement set aside amount for the pilot.

More info?

- WSDA’s Farm to School Toolkit
- USDA-Agriculture Marketing Service
- USDA-Food Nutrition Services (FNS)

Washington State Department of Agriculture
Farm to School Lead
Chris Iberle
 cisiberle@agr.wa.gov
(206) 256 - 1874
School Procurement Overview

The USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables

The pilot supports the purchase of local and regional produce, however standard procurement rules still apply.

**Option 1**

Modify an existing contract with an USDA eligible vendor.

*Competitive bids are not required.*

School buyers can modify an existing contract for purchases from a current vendor through the USDA Pilot Project if participation in the pilot does not result in a material change.

Schools can create an addendum to current contracts which (1) outlines school buyer participation in the pilot and changes to contract, including at minimum, the vendor payment method, and (2) requires the vendor to issue a separate invoice to USDA for produce sold under the pilot.

**Option 2**

Conduct new procurement from a USDA Pilot Project eligible vendor.

*Competitive quotes for purchases over $10,000 required (may include Geographic Preference)*

- **Informal**
  - Small Purchase
    - (requires prices quotes from at least 3 bidders)
  - Micro Purchase
    - Noncompetitive Purchase
      - (value of purchase may not exceed $10,000)

- **Formal**
  - Sealed Bids (IFBs) & Competitive Proposals (RFPs)
    - (requires public advertising)

**Option 3**

Recruit new or existing vendors to participate!

Inform vendors of requirements:

1. Liability Insurance
2. Food Safety Certification (USDA-AMS or GFSI accredited)

Additional qualifications may be required for businesses that work with other suppliers, carry non-domestic product and/or plan to sell minimally processed product. Vendors can get help with their application at WSDA's Farm to School Toolkit or emailing ciberle@agr.wa.gov.

**Can I amend a DoD Fresh contract?**

DoD Fresh Contracts are held by the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Schools cannot modify this contract unless they have a contract with current DoD Fresh vendors outside of DoD Fresh.

**How do I use a geographic preference? Example ways to apply:**

1. A point system that supplies more points to vendors who can supply produce grown in the specified geographic area (e.g. state, county, mile-radius).
2. A price preference in which the quote from any vendor offering produce from the geographic preference area (usually WA-grown) will be reduced by a specified percentage (usually 5% or 10%, but it is up to the school district) for comparison.

Refer to WSDA's Local Food Procurement Page for more details.
Vendor Requirements

The USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables

1. Product Liability Insurance

2. Food Safety Certification

Which best describes your operation? Certification options vary by vendor type:

- **Farm**
  - Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

- **Distributor**
  - Good Handling Practices (GHP) / Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)

- **Processor**
  - Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)

**Examples of Food Safety Certifications**

- **USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)**
- **USDA Harmonized GAP**
- **Any Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) recognized scheme. See GFSI website for options.**
- **Approved Certifiers**
  - USDA - Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) - federal division that provides audit and accreditation programs
  - Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) - collaborative that recognizes various private food safety certifiers based on global quality standards

**Questions?** Contact the Washington State Department of Agriculture Farm to School Team at ciberle@agr.wa.gov or (206) 714 - 2757
Vendor Application Instructions
The USDA Pilot Project for Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables
For vendors with required (1) product liability insurance and (2) food safety certifications

A) Complete two forms

1. (1) Vendor Application Form (electronic signatures accepted)
   - Attachment A - Company Info
     List only products that will be sold through the pilot. All products must be certified through USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) or other approved certifier.
   - Attachment B - Self-Certification (yes/no check boxes)
     Operations that sell more than 2,000 lbs per day and/or operations that negotiate the sale of produce on behalf of another person (i.e., a broker) need a PACA license. Farms that handle their own product are exempt.
     Operations that manufacture, process, pack or hold food for human consumption need a FDA Food Facility Registration (registration is free). Farms are exempt.
   - Attachment C - Domestic Origin Requirement (yes/no check boxes)
     This pilot is for US-grown food only. If you handle any non-domestic product, you must include your Product Segregation Plan. You are also responsible for your supplier(s) compliance. Their segregation plan may be requested upon audit.
   - Attachment D - Suppliers
     If you plan to sell products from other suppliers, list those suppliers and their products. Only include suppliers that you will use for the pilot. Remember that you must be able to document food safety certifications for each of your suppliers. Vendors can also add more suppliers after becoming approved.
     Attachment D is not required if you do not work with any other suppliers.

2. (2) WBSCM Form (obtain online and save as pdf)
   - This form registers your business to accept payment from USDA
   - Unless your operation is a Farm Service Agency, select “Central Vendor” instead of “International Freight Vendor”
   - Requires a SAM (System for Award Management) registration and DUNS number which are both easy and free to obtain on their websites
   - Business Type - If unknown or not officially certified, select “small business” or however you identify your business on SAM.gov
   - Operation Type - Self-identify based on categories or select “other” and type individual response

B) Submit application to scpilotproject@usda.gov

Visit the USDA-AMS website for vendor application forms, eligibility requirements, list of approved vendors, invoice templates and more resources

Questions? Contact the Washington State Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School Team at ciberle@agr.wa.gov or (206) 714 - 2757